

**PRACTICE PASSAGE 1**

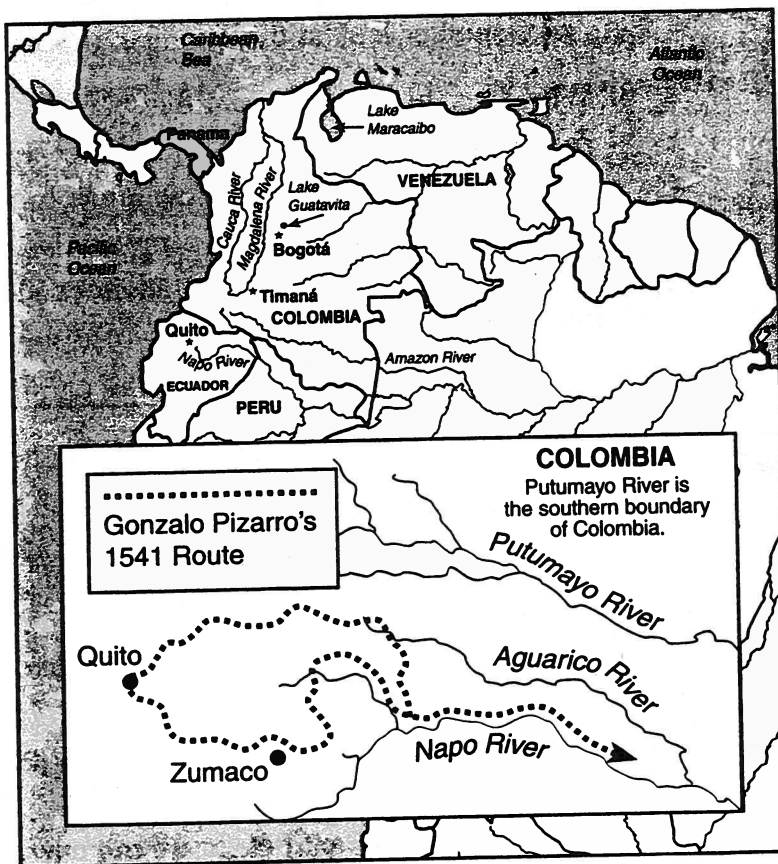
Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Legend of El Dorado

by Julian Green

In 1541, rumors began to spread throughout the colonial city of Quito, Ecuador. Spanish conquistadors¹ heard that a native trader was telling tales of a rich king from a faraway land. The great ruler was said to cover his body in gold dust from head to toe. At the end of each day, the king would wash the gold dust away, and the next day he would be painted anew. The Spaniards referred to this wealthy king as *el dorado*, Spanish for “the golden man.”

The conquistadors already believed that beyond the mountains east of Quito lay wide, flat lands thick with cinnamon, a valuable spice, and that gold was most common around the equator. They had been amazed by the gold dust in the soil of the Timaná region, and the wealth of the Muisca tribe nearby. The Yalcones Indians, in particular, had fought viciously to repel the Spanish invaders from Timaná, leading the Spaniards to suspect that an even greater land of riches awaited them beyond. The conquistadors also knew that many of the Indian tribes painted their bodies to keep cool and ward off insects, so it seemed natural that the lord of a rich land would paint himself with gold dust. Eager to find gold and cinnamon, the conquistadors began to seek the gilded man's kingdom, which they now called El Dorado.



¹ **conquistadors** (kon KEESS ta dors): conquerors, from the Spanish *conquistadores*